

# Alexander Pope & the Twickenham Festival

I have no complaints, but that I wish for you & can't have you. I will say no more – but that I think of & for you, as I ever did, & ever shall, present or absent. I can really [forget] everything besides.

To Martha Blount. Stowe, 4<sup>th</sup> July 1739. *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*: iv. Edited by George Sherburn. 5 Vols. (Oxford, 1956). 186.

"If you could dine with one great writer from the past, who would it be?" I thought and answered "Alexander Pope." She was a bit startled (not knowing how much I love him and relate to him) and said "He was mean", I asked how and she said "He was just so mean to everyone". I can understand why: people were either mean to him or he felt belittled by their easy fame and conventional lives; eventually he wrote *The Dunciad*.

I have finally been able to get my hands on Pope's *Selected Letters*. *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope* was edited by George Sherburn but is virtually impossible to get hold of, it is very expensive, there is a CD edition but that too seems to be extant. There used to be a Geoffrey Tillotson Room above Dr. Inglesfield's office at Birkbeck where I saw the volumes shelved and dreamt of stealing them more than once but never did dare even borrow them to read as Dr. Inglesfield once said I was free to do (since the office was usually not in use) – It was a splendid room. I can relate to Pope, in the love situation perhaps more than to any other poet!

There is a very famous name in English poetry that has been much honoured. His signature is so different from other poets that the name of Pope Alexander or Alexander Pope is the standard bearer of a unique imprint in itself. Many an English scholar has spent their lives studying Pope and have written large lengthy thesis and received PhDs. One of our professors here in England at Birkbeck College was also a Specialist of Pope. So Pope the poet has said something about a scientist about which I can say with certainty that since the dawn of time no scientist has ever received such a tribute. You might think I am exaggerating so I will quote what he wrote before you and you can tell me what exaggeration if at all there is in it. Alexander Pope was born in 1688 and died aged only 56 in 1744. But Newton was born much before him and died within his lifetime. His age at the time was 49 years and he might have been requested to compose a verse upon Newton that would do justice to him and could be scribed upon his tomb because he was the greatest poet of the age and one is astonished how bravely he took up this challenge and wrote a verse and perhaps this is what is inscribed on his tomb. I do not know for I have not seen Newton's tomb. But he had written it for that purpose and it was this:

## **Epitaph intended for Sir Isaac Newton.**

Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night:  
God said, "Let Newton be!" and all was light.

Nature and Nature's laws lay wrapped in the mantle of night or were wrapped in the dark of ignorance. With reference to *The Bible* where it is written that God said 'Let there be light -' He wrote this amazing thing that God did not say 'Let there be light' God said 'Let Newton be' and there was light everywhere. It is such a great tribute that to this day no scientist would ever have received such praise anywhere in the world and in actual fact it is true because many great and renowned scientists of the world drive mankind away from light into the

realms of darkness and away from God but Newton is that scientist who travelled from darkness into light himself and found the wisdom of light so out of all the scientists of the world if anyone could really be called a saint it has to be Newton.

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad – Khalifatul Masih IV. Friday Sermon 19<sup>th</sup> February 1999. *Al Fazl*, 9 April 1999. 7.

A few weeks before Pope died he sent out the so-called Deathbed Edition of the epistles to Burlington, Bathurst, Cobham and Martha Blount, saying “Here I am, like Socrates, distributing my morality among my friends, just as I am dying –” Spence was there and replied “I really had that thought several times when I was last with you, and was apt now and then to look upon myself like Phaedo”:<sup>1</sup>

Ask not the cause that I new Numbers chuse,  
The Lute neglected, and the Lyric Muse ;  
Love taught my Tears in sadder Notes to flow,  
And tun'd my Heart to Elegies of Woe.  
Alas! the Muses now no more inspire,  
Untun'd my Lute, and silent is my Lyre,  
No more your Groves with my glad Songs shall ring,  
No more these Hands shall touch the trembling String:  
To raging Seas unpity'd I'll remove,  
And either cease to live, or cease to love!

'Sappho to Phaon'. *The Poems of Alexander Pope*. Edited by John Butt. (Routledge, 1963). 29, 34, 35.

Pope is the only poet who is capable of distinguishing between the fulgent and refulgent, no other writer has such a poetic knowledge of colour as he does. He knows how at a spring dawn:

All Nature laughs, the Groves are fresh and fair,  
The sun's mild Lustre warms the vital Air;

'Spring: The First Pastoral, or Damon'. *Pastorals: With a Discourse on Pastoral*, (1709). *Poems*, 129.

'And fleecy Clouds were streak'd with Purple Light;<sup>2</sup> in an autumnal sunset – How frost and ice 'Rise white in Air, and glitter o'er the Coast;<sup>3</sup> how in water:

In the clear azure Gleam the Flocks are seen,  
And floating Forests paint the Waves with Green.

'Windsor Forest', (1713). *Poems*, 202.

No other poet sees that:

The Eastern Front was glorious to behold,

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<sup>1</sup> Spence, Joseph. *Observations, Anecdotes, Characters of Books & Men*. No 631.

<sup>2</sup> Pope, Alexander. 'Autumn: The Third Pastoral, or Hylas & Ægon', *Pastorals: With a Discourse on Pastoral*, (1709). *The Poems of Alexander Pope*. Edited by John Butt. (Routledge, 1963). 133.

<sup>3</sup> Pope, 'The Temple of Fame', 1711. *Poems*, 174.

With Diamond flaming, and *Barbaric* Gold.

‘The Temple of Fame’, (1711). *Poems*, 176.

Fair op’ning to some Court’s propitious shine,  
Or deep with di’monds in the flaming mine?

‘An Essay on Man’. *Poems*, 536.

Tho’ the same Sun with all-diffusive rays  
*Blush in the Rose*, and in the Diamond blaze,

‘To Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham’. *Poems*, 553.

He alone heralds the coming of autumn (bar Keats’ sonnet) in this way:

Now Golden Fruits on loaded Branches shine,  
And grateful Clusters swell with floods of wine;

‘Autumn: The Third Pastoral, or Hylas & Ægon’. *Poems*, 134.

How flowers:

A waving Glow his bloomy beds display,  
Blushing in bright diversities of day,

‘To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington’. *Poems*, 591.

Here the bright Crocus and blue Vi’let glow;  
Here Western Winds on breathing Roses blow.

‘Spring: The First Pastoral, or Damon’. *Poems*, 125.

Where bloomy meads with vivid greens were crown’d,  
And glowing violets threw odours round.

*The Odyssey of Homer.*

He knows that in lamplight ‘Old Edward’s Armour breams on Cibber’s breast!’<sup>4</sup> but in firelight:

Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,  
Whose umber’d arms, by fits, thick flashes send.

*The Iliad of Homer.* (Penguin, 1996). 400.

How moonlight is yellow on foliage and silver on stone (an image he borrowed from Shakespeare’s *Romeo & Juliet*):

O’er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,  
And tip with silver every mountain’s head:

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<sup>4</sup> Pope, ‘The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated: To Augustus’. *Poems*, 646.

Ibid. 399.

Tell how the Moon-beam trembling falls  
And tips with silver all the walls:

‘An Imitation of the Sixth Satire of the Second Book of Horace’. *Poems*, 663.

He knows what effect a passing cloud can have on a bright sunny day:

Now a clear Sun the shining Scene displays,  
The transient Landscape now in Clouds decays.

‘The Temple of Fame’. *Poems*, 173.

He sees a pheasant’s breast gold-flaming in *Windsor-Forest* because he knows:

Yet more; the difference is as great between  
The optics seeing, as the objects seen.  
All Manners take a tincture from our own,  
Or come discolour’d thro’ our Passions shown.  
Or Fancy’s beam enlarges, multiplies,  
Contracts, inverts, and gives ten thousand dyes.

‘To Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham’. *Poems*, 550, 551.

Thus when we’re weary of the sun:

Serene in Virgin Modesty, she shines,  
And, unobserv’d, the glaring Orb declines.

‘To a Lady: Of the Characters of Women’. *Poems*, 568.

When drunk:

*Ridotta* sips and dances, till she see  
The doubling Lustres dance as fast as she;

‘The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated’. *Poems*, 615.

How telescope and microscope, how a prism, mirrors:

Ere Wit oblique had broke that steady light,  
Man, like his Maker, saw that all was right,

‘An Essay on Man’. *Poems*, 532.

How reflection:

For Wit’s false mirror held up Nature’s light;  
Shew’d erring Pride, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT;

Ibid, 547.

But also that:

Oft in the clear, still Mirrour of Retreat,  
I study'd SHREWSBURY, the wise and great:

. 'Epilogue to the Satires: ii'. *Poems*, 697.

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Men, some to Bus'ness, some to Pleasure take;  
But ev'ry Woman is at heart a Rake:  
Men, some to Quiet, some to public Strife;  
But ev'ry Lady would be Queen for Life.

'To a Lady: Of the Characters of Women'. *Poems*, 563.

Pope says:

I'm a plain Man, whose Maxim is profest,  
'The Thing at hand is of all Things the best.'

'Sober Advice from Horace, to the Young Gentleman about Town'. *Poems*, 672.

As for her part Martha Blount would not even ride in the same coach as Pope for fear of her reputation. Of her he wrote:

I have so much, & so little, to say of Mrs Patty Bl[ount] that I wish you'd come, & join with me in forcing her to do herself right. I am tired with good Wishes for her, they are so ineffectual: her Virtues & her Weakness go hand in hand; I don't know which are greater: but everyone who is her friend on account of the first must fret at the latter, since nothing can do her good for want of her own cooperation. She is very sensible of any true Friendship, at the same time that she disappoints any true Friend.<sup>5</sup>

... I am at this instant plac'd betwixt Two such Ladies that in good faith 'tis all I'm able to do, to keep my self in my skin ... let me but have the Reputation of those in my keeping, & as for my own, let the Devil, or let Dennis take it for ever! How gladly wou'd I give all I am worth, that is to say, my PASTORALS for ONE of their MAIDENHEADS, & my ESSAY for the other? I wou'd lay out all my POETRY in Love; an ORIGINAL for a LADY, & a TRANSLATION for a WAITING MAID!<sup>6</sup>

Madam, - I have so much Esteem for you, and so much of the other thing, that were I a handsome fellow I should do you a vast deal of good: but as it is, all I am good for it to write a civil letter, or to make a find speech. The truth is that considering how often & how openly I have declared Love to you. I am astonished (and a little affronted) that you have not forbid my correspondence, & directly said, SEE MY FACE NO MORE. It is not enough, Madam, for your reputation, that you keep your hands pure, for the stain of such Ink as might be asked to gratify a male correspondent; Alas! While you heart consents to encourage him in this lewd liberty of writing, you are not (indeed you are not) what you would so fain have me think you

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<sup>5</sup> Pope, Alexander. To Hugh Bethel, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1736. *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope: iv*. Edited by George Sherburn. 5 vols. (Oxford University Press, 1956). 39, 40.

<sup>6</sup> Pope. To Cromwell, 1711. *Correspondence: i*. 137, 138.

are not, what you would enough to conclude (like most young fellows) that a fine Lady's silence is consent, and so I write on.<sup>7</sup>

I love to meat but Ortolans, and women but you. Tho indeed that's no proper comparison but for fatt Dutchesses; For to love you, is as if one should wish to Eat Angels, or drink Cherubim-Broath.<sup>8</sup>

I have heard of women who have had a kindness for Men of my Make; but it has been after Enjoyment, never before; and I know to my Cost you have had no Taste of that Talent in me, which most Ladies would not only Like better, but Understand and better, than any other I have.<sup>9</sup>

He wishes Martha would come to a nearby country house 'But this, I know, is a Dream: and almost Every thing I wish, in relation to you, is so always!'<sup>10</sup> But one wish that was granted him was that though he had no children a poem or 2 of his would survive him when he is dust and ashes.<sup>11</sup>

Lytton Strachey compared Pope's invectives to a monkey pouring down boiling lead on his enemies from the comparative safety of a window. The Revd. William Broome, another one who was irked by his mention in *The Dunciad* wrote to Elisabeth Fenton:

He now keeps his muse as wizards are said to keep tame devils only to send them abroad to plague their neighbours. I often resemble him to an hedgehog: he wraps himself up in his down, lies snug and warm, and sets his bristles out against all mankind. Sure he is fond of being hated. I wonder he is not thrashed: but his littleness is his protection; no man shoots a wren.<sup>12</sup>

Upon Gay's death he wrote:

Good God! how often are we to die before we go quite off this stage? God keep those we have left! Few are worth praying for, and one's self the least of all.<sup>13</sup>

A year later he wrote against to Swift of his sense of loss:

I have felt more (I fancy) in the loss of poor Mr. Gay, than I shall suffer in the thought of going away Myself into a state that can feel none of this sort of losses.<sup>14</sup>

I learn to sleep less and drink more, whenever you are named among us.<sup>15</sup>

It was to swift that he wrote:

At all adventures, yours and my name shall stand linked as friends to posterity, both in verse and prose, and (as Tully calls it) in *consuetudine Studiorum*.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Pope. To Teresa & Martha Blount, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1716. *Correspondence: i.* 349, 350.

<sup>8</sup> Pope. To Teresa & Martha Blount, 13<sup>th</sup> September 1717. *Ibid.* 428.

<sup>9</sup> Pope. To Teresa & Martha Blount, 1716. *Ibid.* 455, 456.

<sup>10</sup> Pope. To Nartha Blount, 7<sup>th</sup> July 1739. *Correspondence: iv.* 188.

<sup>11</sup> Pope. To William Fortescu, 27<sup>th</sup> March 1739. *Ibid.* 169.

<sup>12</sup> *Correspondence: ii.* 489.

<sup>13</sup> Pope. To Jonathan Swift, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1732. *Correspondence: iii.* 335.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 365.

<sup>15</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> June 1716. *Correspondence: i.* 341, 342.

On 13<sup>th</sup> June I made my way to Twickenham to visit Alexander Pope's Grotto which only opens once a year as part of the Twickenham Festival. Firstly, it was a little walk from the station down Church Street right down the end of which I had to purchase a ticket which had been reserved for me. With not long to go the lady said it was about a 15 minute walk, she was very soppy-stern but thankfully printed me a map with which I set off back up Church Street and somewhat in the direction of Pope's Villa. With minutes to go I walked up and down the road with no sight of Pope's Vila anywhere or the school which now occupies its original location. There was a sort of community centre with 2 or 3 ladies outside who I asked but they said they were tourists too, went back down the way I came (in case I had missed it), found a school with no entrance. Walked further down again, found an office with one of those irritating buzzers again which I didn't bother pressing as it looked like nobody had been in for a long time, the post oozing out of the letterbox. Walked further down and found the school with a small rectangular plaque above the door: Pope's Villa. Rang the buzzer a few times before it was opened and I asked about the grotto tour. The chap at the school reception asked if I had a ticket. I was in such a hurry that I handed him the sealed envelope with the ticket inside which I had had no time to open.

Having been escorted down to the grotto which (lying caverned beneath the school) is open only once a year and probably for the last time at that as I was told the school has or is about to be sold and the previous owner had never granted access. A man introduced the garden, grotto and the villa and most of the crowd walked away after that. The grotto was described thus:

Mr *Pope's* poetick Genius has introduced a kind of Machinery, which performs the same Part in the Grotto that supernal Powers and incorporeal Beings act in the heroic Species of Poetry, cast your Eyes upward, and you half shudder to see Cataracts of Water precipitating over your Head, from impending Stones and Rocks, while salient Spouts rise in rapid Streams at your feet: thus, by a fine Taste and happy Management of Nature, you are presented with an indistinguishable Mixture of Realities and Imagery.<sup>17</sup>

Pope himself offered descriptions on a number of occasions and once said that he could hear in his grotto 'No noise but water, ever friend to thought'.<sup>18</sup>

'To Mr. Gay,' merits quoting in full after he wrote a letter congratulating him on the completion of his house:

Ah, friend, 'tis true - this truth you lovers know—  
In vain my structures rise, my gardens grow,  
In vain fair Thames reflects the double scenes  
Of hanging mountains, and of sloping greens:  
Joy lives not here; to happier seats it flies,  
And only dwells where WORTLEY casts her eyes.  
What are the gay parterre, the chequer'd shade,  
The morning bower, the ev'ning colonnade,  
But soft recesses of uneasy minds,

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<sup>16</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1727/1728. *Correspondence*: ii. 480.

<sup>17</sup> 'An Epistolary Description of the late Mr Pope's House & Gardens at TWICKENHAM'. *The Newcastle General Magazine/Monthly Intelligencer*. (January 1748).

<sup>18</sup> Pope. To Judith Cowper, 5<sup>th</sup> November 1727. *Correspondence*.

To sigh unheard in, to the passing winds?  
 So the struck deer in some sequester'd part  
 Lies down to die, the arrow at his heart;  
 There, stretch'd unseen in coverts hid from day,  
 Bleeds drop by drop, and pants his life away.<sup>19</sup>

He wrote poems on lopping trees in his garden and this verse also:

And life itself can nothing more supply  
 Than just to plan our projects, and to die

‘Epigrams 1738 – 1741: Couplet On His Grotto’. *Poems*, 834.

An endless trail of friends came to visit and revisit him here:

Thou who shalt stop, where *Thames*’ translucent Wave  
 Shines a broad Mirrour thro’ the Shadowy Cave;  
 Where lingering Drops from Mineral Roofs distill,  
 And pointed Crystals break the sparkling Rill,  
 Unpolish’d Gemms no Ray on Pride bestow,  
 And latent Metals innocently glow:  
 Approach. Great NATURE studiously behold!  
 And eye the Mine without a Wish for Gold.  
 Approach: But awful! Lo th’ *Ægerian* Grott,  
 Where, nobly-pensive, ST. JOHN sate and thought;  
 Where *British* Sighs from dying WYNDHAM stole,  
 And the bright Flame was shot thro’ MARCHMONT’s Soul.  
 Let such, such only, tread this sacred FLOOR,  
 Who dare to love their Country, and be poor.

‘Verses on a Grotto by the River Thames at Twickenham, composed of Marbles, Spars, & Minerals’. *Poems*, 707.




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<sup>19</sup> Pope. *Poems*. 472.



It was here that in 1734, a lady who was visiting him fell into the Thames as he escorted her down his landing stairs to her boat, pulling him in after her, and both nearly drowned. It was here that his windows were broken when he dined with Bathurst and Bolingbroke on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1738:

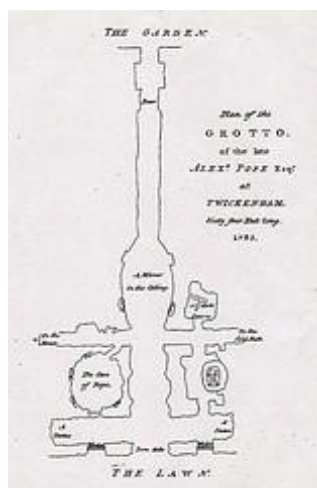
What? Shall each spur-gall'd Hackney of the Day,  
When *Paxton* gives him double Pots and Pay,  
Or each new-pension'd Sycophant, pretend  
To break my Windows, if I treat a Friend;

'Epilogue to the Satires: ii'. *Poems*, 699, 700.

He wrote to Edward Blount describing a visit from his daughters:

I still see them walking on my Green at Twickenham, and gratefully remember, not only their green Gowns, but the instructions they gave me how to slide down and trip up the steepest slopes of my mount.<sup>20</sup>

It was here that he was befriended by that strange lady Amica who we shall never know. Much has been written on Pope's villa and grotto<sup>21</sup> but Pope's own descriptions are by far the best. After his death, his gardener John Serle left a detailed account in *A plan of Mr. Pope's Garden*.



Anthony Beckles Wilson has also published local studies of Pope, namely *Alexander Pope's Grotto in Twickenham*, *Mastiffs & Minerals in the Life of Alexander Pope*, *Alexander Pope's Twickenham*, and a history of the parish church of St Mary the Virgin:

Let the young Ladies be assured I make nothing new in my Gardens without wishing to see the print of the Fairy Steps in every part of 'em. I have put the last Hand to my works of this kind, in happily finishing the subterraneous Way and Grotto; I there found a Spring of the clearest Water, which falls in a perpetual Rill, that echoes thro' the Cavern day and night. From the River *Thames*, you see thro' my Arch up a Walk of the Wilderness to a kind of open Temple, wholly compos'd of Shells in the Rustic Manner; and from that distance under the Temple you look down thro' a sloping Arcade of Trees, and see the Sails on the River passing suddenly and vanishing, as thro' a Perspective Glass. When you shut the Doors of this Grotto,

<sup>20</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1721. *Correspondence*: iii. 86.

<sup>21</sup> Mack, Maynard. *The Garden & the City*. (University of Toronto, 1969).

it becomes on the instant, from a luminous Room, a *Camera obscura*; on the Walls of which all the objects of the River, Hills, Woods, and Boats, are forming a moving Picture in their visible Radiations: And when you have a mind to light it up, it affords you a very different Scene: it is finished with Shells interspersed with Pieces of Looking-glass in angular forms; and in the Ceiling is a Star of the same Material, at which when a Lamp (of an orbicular Figure of thin Alabaster) is hung in the Middle, a thousand pointed Rays glitter and are reflected over the Place. There are connected to this Grotto by a narrower Passage two Porches, with Niches and Seats; one toward the River, of smooth Stones, full of light and open; the other toward the Arch of Trees, rough with Shells, Flints, and Iron ore. The Bottom is paved with simple Pebble, as the adjoining Walk up the Wilderness to the Temple, is to be Cockle-shells, in the natural Taste, agreeing not ill with the little dripping Murmur, and the Aquatic Idea of the whole Place. It wants nothing to compleat it but a good Statue with an Inscription, like that beautiful antique one which you know I am so fond of,

Nymph of the Grot, these sacred Springs I keep,  
And to the Murmur of these Waters sleep;  
Whoe'er thou art, ah gently tread the Cave,  
Ah Bathe in silence, or in silence lave.<sup>22</sup>

To Bolingbroke he wrote:

Next to patching up my Constitution, my great Business has been to patch up a Grotto (the same You have so often sate in the Sunny part of under my house,) with all the varieties of Natures works under ground – I hope yet to live to philosophize with You in this Musæum, which is now a Study for Virtuosi, & a Scene for contemplation.<sup>23</sup>

The gardens and villa were demolished by a later lady tenant who got so fed up of visitors coming to see Pope long after his death that she had all evidence of his ever having lived there removed:

What Walls can guard me, or what Shades can hide?  
They pierce my Thickets, thro' my Grot they glide,  
By land, by water, they renew the charge,  
They stop the Chariot, and they board the Barge.  
No place is sacred, not the Church is free,  
Ev'n *Sunday* shines no *Sabbth-day* to me:

‘An Epistle from Mr. Pope, to Dr. Arbuthnot’. *Poems*, 598.

In his garden there was a vineyard, an orange orchard, ananas, an orchard containing standard espaliered fig trees, rare varieties of French peas, broccoli, fennel, asparagus, artichokes, cabbage, spinage, endives, lettuce, beans, beats, herbs, Jamaica strawberries, bees, bantam chickens. The grotto also appears in numerous other poems:

TO VIRTUE ONLY and HER FRIENDS, A FRIEND  
The World beside may murmur, or commend.  
Know, all the distant Din that World can keep  
Rolls o'er my *Grotto*, and but soothes my Sleep.  
There, my Retreat the best Companions grace,  
Chiefs, out of War, and Statesmen, out of Place.

<sup>22</sup> Pope. To Edward Blount, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1725. *Correspondence*.

<sup>23</sup> Pope. To Viscount Henry St. John Bolingbroke, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1740. *Correspondence*: iv. 261, 262.

There *St. John* mingles with my friendly Bowl,  
The Feast of Reason and the Flow of Soul:  
And He, whose Lightning pierc'd th' *Iberian* Lines,  
Now, forms my Quincunx, and now ranks my Vines,  
Or tames the Genius of the stubborn Plain,  
Almost as quickly, as he conquer'd *Spain*.

'The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated'. *Poems*, 617, 618.

Alas! To Grotto's and to Groves we run,  
To Ease and Silence, ev'ry Muse's Son:  
Thoughts, which at Hyde-Park-Corner I forgot,  
Meet and rejoin me, in the pensive Grott.

'The Second Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated by Mr. Pope'. *Poems*, 653, 655.







The grotto also contains a piece from the Giant's Causeway sent to Pope by Sir Hans Sloane.



A part of the willow tree, a few twigs of which Pope enclosed in a letter to Ralph Allen to

give to Dr. Pierre in Bath on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1742 still lies in the corner. Turner painted a view of the villa and seeing its destruction in 1808 penned some verses 'On the Demolition of Pope's House at Twickenham' which included the lines:

Now to destruction doom'd thy peaceful grott  
Pope's willow bending to the earth forgot  
Save one weak scion by my fostering care  
Nursed into life which fell on bracken spare  
On the lone bank to mark the spot with pride  
Dip the long branches in the rippling tide.



I walked back down to the centre – Sat in the churchyard of St Mary's and had fish & chips, fish being my staple diet these days – On the churchyard walls is a tablet erected by Pope himself.



To The Memory Of  
Mary Beach  
Who Died Nov 5<sup>th</sup> 1727 aged 78  
Alex. Pope. Whom She Nursed In  
His Infancy And Constantly Attended  
For Thirty Eight Years  
In Gratitude To A Faithful Servant  
Erected This Stone

Pope erected a tablet in the church to his father, leaving an empty space for his mother which was filled in 1734 upon her death and added *et sibi* [and himself]. The inscription is in Latin. Pope's own grave was marked with a simple P until the Faculty of English at Yale University placed a tablet in his memory just below his slab. Earlier, Bishop Warburton (in 1761)

installed a memorial thinking Pope's own plaque too insignificantly undeserving and too humble. I could see my face reflected in the shiny new plaque:

Be grateful that you wrote well in this place,  
Let the torn poems sail from you like a flock  
Of white egrets in a long last sigh of relief

Derek Walcott, *White Egrets*, (2010).

There was a band of Morris Dancers in the small ground behind the church where I sat down and ate my lunch.

